

**OFFICIAL**

**LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**LINCOLN, RI 02865**

**DATE: December 8, 2005**

**TIME: 5:00pm – Special Meeting - Open**

**PLACE: Administration Building**

**1624 Lonsdale Avenue, Lincoln, RI 02865**

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Weiss, Chair; MaryAnn Roll, Vice Chair; John Zangari, Clerk; Elizabeth Robson, Julie Zito, and Jerry St. Germain. Sue McClain was absent.**

**ADMINISTRATORS IN ATTENDANCE: John Tindall-Gibson, Superintendent; Georgia Fortunato, Lori Miller, Bob Martin, Kevin McNamara, John Scienzo, and Charlotte Tavares.**

**Motion by St. Germain to open meeting. Seconded by Zangari. All in favor. Motion carried.**

## **OPENING CEREMONY**

**Chairman Weiss asked Bob Martin to give a presentation of what is going on with the proposals that are going around pertaining to the Ninth Grade Academy or Ninth Grade Grouping. There has been a lot of discussion in the community with what we are doing with the**

**middle school space that is being freed up as a result of the middle school moving over. Georgia Fortunato will talk about the space needed for special education.**

**Mr. Martin introduced the high school administrative team – Kevin McNamara, John Scienzo, and Charlotte Tavares. The School Committee had a binder that was put together by Mrs. Tavares. Mr. Martin presented a power point presentation with the opening line.....You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you are going because you might not get there. Yogi Berra, New York Yankee Catcher. (Presentation is attached.)**

**The ninth grade has been identified as the most critical point to help students from dropping out of school. They are working on reducing the drop out rate and the course failure rate. The drop out rate and course failure is higher in the ninth grade. One suggestion is to create a Ninth Grade Learning Center. They are having some issues identifying when students come into the ninth grade how to make them feel more engaged. The State of Rhode Island also supports this through Personalization.**

**In ninth grade, the amount of courses failed (248), 87 students failed one or more courses in the ninth grade. That is 34.3% of the courses failed total and 30.96% of total students who failed one or more courses. Tindall-Gibson said when he was working in this area 15-years ago, the numbers were very similar to this in high schools**

across the country as far as of drop outs. When you look at the numbers and the student's records, a surprising number of the kids who dropped out in the ninth grade also dropped out in the tenth grade and the eleventh grade.

The transition to high school is a process and not an event. The need for a ninth grade center more than screams for acceptance with a well designed transition program. The research found that more ninth grade students drop out of school because they get lost in the high school setting and have less attention paid to them as individuals.

Mr. Martin discussed the five C's. Studies reported student achievement in the ninth grade year. Students who drop out of high school usually make that decision in their ninth grade year. Freshman Learning Centers is a way of addressing this.

Prior to the opening of school, a group, which included the Administrative team at the high school, the Superintendent, Ms. Fortunato, Mr. Mencucci, Mrs. Michaud, and our architects met together to review the teacher's recommendations. The teachers each wanted a room to teacher instead of carrying their things around. The Department Chairs requested their own offices as well as storage space (11 Department Chairs), professional development space. Weiss asked Martin how many offices we would get if we divided classrooms. Martin said it depends on what the architect identified. He has the blueprints. Fortunato said the architect was reconfiguring

Bruce's office, the middle school conference room walls were going to be knocked down, and other reconfigurations were being looked at. Zangari asked if there was going to be a Physics lab for Physics First. Will it be placed inside the old middle school if we go with this? Martin said the scheduling would be based upon the curriculum. If the Physics curriculum necessitates the use of that middle school science room, that's where that teacher needs to be placed. Zangari wants to know if Martin will be putting in a Physics lab in the junior high school building so it will be there with the 9th graders? Martin said it is already in place but it is not a true Physics lab.

St. Germain wants to know the game plan for the present junior high cafeteria. Martin said the high school needs to use both cafeterias. Weiss wants to know when Martin will provide the Committee floor plans. Martin said there has been some issue with response to the architects. Martin is hoping the drafts will be available Monday or Tuesday of next week. A task force has been developed. There are no major curriculum changes as that involves the Curriculum Advisory Council.

December 8, 2005

Page 2

Martin discussed the transitional scheduling plan. The 9th Grade

**Learning Center Task Force overwhelmingly endorsed the transitional teaming approach. This places students on two teams, English/Social Studies and Math/Science.**

**Martin discussed Wheels of Learning program headed by Bob Svitil. It's a technology education program with a nationwide recognized curriculum. Patricia Kilsey works with the School to Career office.**

**Roll asked the current requirement for Community Service. Martin said there is a civic responsibility. It is a semester course usually taken in the junior/senior year.**

**Weiss asked if we still have five special classrooms and 12 ninth grade classrooms? Fortunato said besides the five classrooms, the suite for the Family Consumer Science room at the middle school will now be utilized by the special education program for the 18 to 21 year old program. She is also trying to build upon the Alternative Learning Program. Weiss asked Fortunato if she had any idea of how many children she was going to bring back. She will not put out six to eight students out of district If she is afforded the opportunities to use the consultants for Bradley, Groden, her clinical psychologists, and focusing on all her initiatives. She is confident she could keep between six to eight students in district, not paying between a \$30K - \$67K tuition. She cannot definitely tell us she can do this as it would go against the IEP process.**

Weiss asked Martin how much more time is required to get this through his faculty and get buy in that this is what they want to propose to us? Martin said the next thing is go in front of the School Improvement Team and the next Faculty Meeting in January.

Weiss said he will give the Budget Board a presentation in January.

Tindall-Gibson wanted this presented to the community first, beginning with Monday evening, 12/12/05.

Robson believes we should bring the original brochure to the meeting because it speaks of the space utilization issue.

Motion to adjourn by St. Germain. Seconded by Zangari. All in favor.  
Motion carried.

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JOHN ZANGARI, CLERK      DATE